

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
ATTORNEY GENERAL



55 Elm Street
P.O. Box 120
Hartford, CT 06141-0120

Office of The Attorney General
State of Connecticut

*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 26, 2008*

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 407, An Act Prohibiting Political "Robo" calls.

The proposal prohibits automated political phones calls to individuals registered on the 'do not call' list. The proposal authorizes the Attorney General to enforce this law, recovering actual damages or statutory damages of \$25,000.

Few things annoy and outrage people as much as a telephone call from some luminary -- recording -- soliciting your support for a particular candidate or issue or denigrating an opposing candidate or viewpoint.

Over the past few years, the use of politically oriented robo-calls soared. New technology that makes more than 200,000 calls an hour, costing 3 to 5 cents an hour, enabled more and more political campaigns to pursue this tactic.

Such calls have alienated many voters. Indeed some campaigns announced their abandonment of robo-calls.

Several years ago, I successfully worked with the committee on legislation creating a do-not-call list for telemarketing calls. The state registry has been very successful and ultimately, the federal government followed Connecticut's lead and enacted a national do-not-call list for telemarketing calls.

Moreover, telemarketing do-not-call lists have been found by the United States Supreme Court to be constitutional.

Political robo-calls are even more intrusive and offensive than telemarketing calls. Our do-not-call law should be extended to this form of abuse. A do-not-call law empowers consumers to make the choice whether or not to receive these calls. I anticipate that many Connecticut residents will take advantage of this opportunity.

I urge the committee to favorably consider legislation to establish a do-not-call list for political robo-calls.